

Investing in Cheektowaga's schools, families and infrastructure

Every year at this time, lawmakers in Albany begin the work of negotiating New York state's budget. It's during this time when we make decisions about the priorities that will shape our communities for years to come. Budget season for me is about advocating to bring resources home to my district to make sure local families, schools and municipalities have the support they need to thrive.

This year, I'm pushing for major investments that will make a real difference in the Town of Cheektowaga.

First, my budget proposal includes an additional \$6 million for Cheektowaga schools so our students and teachers have the resources they need to succeed in the classroom. At the same time, the state is moving toward fully funding universal prekindergarten, with the goal of providing a seat for every 4-year-old who applies by fall 2028. Expanding access to early education is one of the most important investments we can make because it sets children up for continued success in life.

I know firsthand how important early childhood education can be. When my son was 3 years old, he was able to attend a free, full-day preschool program. Because of that program, I was able to keep working to provide for my family, and today my son is thriving in kindergarten thanks to that strong early educational foundation. But too many families in Erie County don't have access to those same opportunities.

In Erie County, more than 5,400 children rely on the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). The program helps working families afford child care. But Erie County has a waitlist of 300 children for this program. More help is needed for local families.

That's why I'm fighting for Erie County to be included in a new pilot program that will expand child care access for children from infancy to age 3, regardless of a family's income. Expanding access to child care is not just a family issue; it is an economic development issue. When parents can find and afford safe, reliable care, they can work, support local businesses and strengthen Western New York's economy.

The budget also includes critical investments in local infrastructure and municipal services. Through the state's Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS), Cheektowaga is expected to receive more than \$500,000 to repair roads and fill potholes after this winter's bitter cold took a toll on our streets.

In addition, I'm fighting to secure \$1 million for the Town of Cheektowaga to support public safety investments and help provide relief from rising property tax bills.

These are the kinds of investments that are felt in people's everyday lives: better schools, safer streets, more money in your wallet and more opportunities for working families. Budget negotiations are never easy, but I will continue working every day in Albany to make sure Cheektowaga gets its fair share.



**April
Baskin**

63rd District
**NEW YORK STATE
SENATOR**